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ABSTRACT

This publication offers a brief overview and description of the Educational Management Project, a comprehensive inservice program for educational administrators that was developed by the Tucson Public Schools. A series of short sections discusses all the project's major facets, including its target population, its general approach, its structure, its objectives, its evaluation design, its requirements for success, and its preliminary outcomes. (JG)

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THE EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT PROJECT

E.S.E.A. TITLE III

TUCSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

TUCSON, ARIZONA

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1973 - 1974 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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AWARENESS → INTEREST → EVALUATION → TRIAL → ADOPTION

EA 008 059

TITLE OF PROJECT: Educational Management Project

LOCATION OF THE PROJECT: Tucson Public Schools, District No. 1, Pima County, Tucson, Arizona

GRADES AFFECTED: K-12

PROJECT NUMBER: 10-001-12-71-0031

PROJECT DIRECTOR: Peter G. Gazzola

LENGTH OF PROJECT: April 1, 1971 - March 31, 1974

Target Population

The Educational Management Project has been designed to meet the needs of public school administrators. The Project target population has for three years consisted of all personnel in the Tucson school district holding the positions of project or curriculum coordinator, high school dean, curriculum supervisor, department director, assistant principal or building principal. The Project's program would be appropriate for any group of educational administrators of any size or any level of administration (elementary, junior high, high school). Administrators would not have to be employed by the same district to benefit from participation. With some modification, the program could be conducted for administrative interns or classroom teachers. Any person with supervisory responsibilities could benefit from participation.

Need Situation

Inservice education is widely recognized as a suitable strategy for helping classroom teachers acquire the new skills and attitudes necessary to meet the demands of a rapidly changing teaching

role. As the teaching role has expanded and become more complex, so has the role of the school administrator. The overall effectiveness of any teaching staff is heavily dependent upon the administrator's ability to make informed decisions and develop and implement plans for translating those decisions into fruitful action. Few would deny the influence that recent changes in the teacher's role has had on the administrator's role, but unfortunately, less has been done to help the administrator adjust to and prepare for these changes than has been done to help the classroom teacher.

Preparation programs for school administrators concentrate largely on the skills and attitudes the administrator needs to execute decisons made by others such as the state education department, the state legislature, the School Board and his own superintendent. Relatively little attention has been paid to the skills and abilities the administrator needs to make decisions in those areas where he is given increasing responsibilities, especially in the areas of instructional program evaluation and improvement.

Because the public has become increasingly more interested in the operation of schools and because the professional educator has become more concerned about reconciling pluralistic views through wider participation in the decision-making process, the administrator must develop the skills required for systematic decision making and the attitudes necessary to effectively supervise the decision-making process. Systematic decision making

requires a logical approach to the identification and analysis of problems. It requires accuracy, precision and a high degree of objectivity. It requires a consciousness of the relationship of means to ends and the ability to communicate effectively with others. But, most importantly, it requires a measure of courageous creativity that is not to be expected from a professional educator who has been trained to skillfully execute the decisions of others.

General Approach

The 1973-74 Project design is a four-part strategy which reflects the Project staff's acceptance of the five stages of the adoption process identified by Herbert F. Lionberger in Adoption of New Ideas and Practices (1960). In the process of adopting the practices of educational management, an individual administrator will progress through these stages: awareness of the new practice, interest in learning more, evaluation of its possible applicability, tentative trial of the practice on a small scale and finally, adoption into the on-going operation of his school.

One component of the Project strategy is a series of eight monthly large group meetings, This component was conceived as a means of exposing the district administrators who have not previously participated in the Project to the fundamental concepts and principles of educational management. The purpose of this component is to bring as large a proportion of these administrators as possible to the awareness stage of the adoption process.

The Management Study Group (MSG) is a component of the Project designed to bring a group of administrators through the second stage of the process (the active seeking of more information about educational management) into the third stage (the evaluation of the applicability of educational management practices). The MSG is open to any administrator who has not previously participated in the Project. The design of this component is similar to the strategy used by the Project during its first two years of operation. Approximately one-third of the district's administrators have participated in this component of the Project since the fall of 1971.

The remaining two components of the Project strategy have been designed as means of bringing a smaller group of interested administrators into and through the fourth stage of the adoption process, the tentative trial of the practices of educational management on a small scale. The first of these components is the Management Study and Application Group (MSAG), comprised of administrators who have participated in the Project during 1971-72 or 1972-73 and who wish to pursue their study further by applying selected management and decision-making practices on a short-term basis in their own schools or departments. The second component is the Doolen Feeder Area component (DFA), also comprised of previous participants. Unlike the MSAG, these administrators are all assigned to elementary schools or a junior high school in a single junior high school feeder area. The members of this group have the same interest as the members of the MSAG, but will

attempt to apply their new knowledge as a team to an area of concern that requires the cooperation of all the administrators and schools in their feeder area.

Program Description

Though the target group for the series of monthly meetings consists of all administrators who have not previously enrolled in the Project, all district administrators are invited to attend regardless of previous participation. Each of the eight meetings is one and a half to two hours long and consists of an introductory presentation by the project director followed by activities designed to stimulate discussion of and reflection upon the topic of the meeting. These activities may include film presentations, small group discussions, simulation exercises or panel discussions. The eight topics selected for the 1973-74 series are: (1) the management of time, (2) systems concepts, (3) goals and performance objectives, (4) systematic decision making, and the four functions of management, (5) the planning function, (6) the organizing function, (7) the directing function and (8) the controlling function.

The ten administrators enrolled in the Management Study Group meet for two and a half hours a week for 24 weeks. Each session consists of four parts: a review of the previous session's material; the completion of written pre-session and post-session tests; the presentation, discussion and practice of a basic concept of management and the techniques associated with it; and the selection of the next meeting's topic. Twenty session topics

have been selected by the Project staff, but the members of the MSG determine the sequence of these topics. Since the group is relatively small, the administrators are generally involved in all activities as a group. The members' interest is maintained through a variety of simulation exercises, group discussions, short illustrative case discussions and practice activities.

The Management Study and Application Group meets with the same frequency as the MSG. The 24 meetings of this group are designed as 12 pairs of meetings, however. The first meeting of each pair involves a review and discussion of a topical area in educational management which has been selected in advance by the group members. The participants are then assigned the task of completing an illustrative activity at their own school during the ensuing week. The group gathers for the second meeting of each pair to discuss and compare their experiences in trying out the activity. In selecting their topics for discussion and trial, the participants use the "Taxonomy of Educational Management Functions and Activities" developed by the Project staff.

The members of the Doolen Feeder Area group meet biweekly from September through March. Educational management concepts and techniques are introduced and discussed as the need arises in the group's effort to identify and analyze the problem area they will commit themselves to solving as a feeder area administrative team. Approximately half of the DFA participants are supportive services staff while the remainder are building principals. The members of this group have the difficult task of

integrating and trying out two innovations in administrative practice at the same time: the practices of educational management and feeder area administrative teamwork. Each session involves the attempt to isolate common problem areas and develop plans for gathering information needed to analyze those problems. Between sessions the participants are instructed to collect information from their respective faculties or staffs or to complete individual leadership assessment activities designed to clarify the administrative role.

All components of the Project are conducted during the administrators' on-duty time. No released time is provided those who participate. Participation is entirely voluntary, and no academic or salary credit is awarded those who enroll in the Project.

Project Objectives

The Project has one or two major objectives for each of its four components:

1. Of the administrators who attend each of the eight monthly meetings, 75 percent of them will demonstrate knowledge of the fundamental concepts, principles and/or processes of systematic educational management which were the topics of that particular session.
2. Anytime between the end of the first monthly meeting and April 1, 1974, 30 percent of those attending at least one session will demonstrate interest in learning more about systematic educational management.

3. Upon completion of their participation in the Management Study Group, 60 percent of the participants will possess at least 65 percent of the 28 skills, abilities and attitudes identified as important prerequisites for the successful guided practice of systematic educational management.
4. Upon completion of their participation in the Management Study and Application Group, at least 60 percent of the participants will possess at least 65 percent of the 26 skills, abilities and attitudes identified as important prerequisites for the successful independent practice of systematic educational management.
5. Before completion of their participation in the Doolen Feeder Area Group, the participants will cooperatively develop a plan for solving problems of program articulation in a feeder area that employs the team concept of school administration. This plan will consist of at least these seven parts: (a) goal, (b) objectives, (c) strategy description, (d) job descriptions, (e) an organizational structure, (f) an evaluation design and (g) a cost estimate.
6. Upon completion of their participation in the Doolen Feeder Area Group, at least 60 percent of the participants will demonstrate at least 65 percent of the skills, abilities and attitudes considered necessary for the successful application of systematic educational management to an aspect of school operation that could be improved through administrative teaming.

Evaluation Design

In general, the measurement techniques used to determine the degree to which the Project objectives have been met are written attitude surveys and written pre-session and post-session tests. Evaluation questionnaires for gathering both product and process evaluation information are distributed to those who attend the monthly meetings. These questionnaires are voluntarily completed and returned by the participants. Those who attend the Management Study Group sessions complete short Project-constructed tests before the session and after the session activities are completed. Comparable techniques are to be used for measuring the achievement of the two MSAG objectives and the second DFA objective. A checklist similar to the one used in 1972-73 to evaluate written plans produced by the participants will be used to measure the achievement of the first DFA objective (Objective No. 5).

The pre/posttesting technique is not used to measure improvement over time as is the usual case since the objectives do not stipulate an increment in skills but instead stipulate a minimum performance level regardless of entry level performance. Pretest information is necessary to establish whether successful participant performance is attributable to the session activities. The minimum performance level of 60 percent of the group achieving 65 percent of the session objectives was derived from previous Project experience, being slightly higher than the success rates achieved during the Project's first two years of operation. In the case of the monthly meetings, the 75 percent success level for Objective No. 1 and the 30 percent success level for Objective No. 2 are provisional and not based on prior experience.

In addition to the instruments designed by the Project to measure achievement of the objectives listed above, process evaluation instruments called "observer guides" or "feedback forms" are collected from the participants in the MSG, MSAG and DFA. The purpose of these instruments is to collect immediate feedback about the participants' reactions to session activities. The Project staff complete comparable instruments after each session. Participant feedback is compared with the staff reports and the session activity outlines to determine the procedural effectiveness of each of the inservice sessions.

Requirements for Success

Instructional materials differ in content for each of the four inservice groups, but each set of materials consists of session activity outlines for the instructor and all necessary participant worksheets and handouts. The materials developed for the Tucson participants would be equally suitable for groups of administrators elsewhere with little or no modification needed. Since the effectiveness of session activities is partially dependent upon the subject matter selected for case discussions and practice sessions, some session materials would be made more effective if the subject matter were adjusted to include topics of local interest to the participants.

Conducting all four components of the Project strategy requires five and a half to six and a half days of instructional time per month for each school year. Evaluation activities require approximately five days per month if no new instruments are developed.

The design and development of instructional materials requires at least six weeks prior to the beginning of the inservice meetings each year if a design revision is necessary plus at least ten days per month for preparing and assembling instructional materials thereafter. The Project staff consists of a director, a management specialist, a secretary and a part-time clerk. A smaller staff, perhaps a full-time instructor and a parttime secretary, could successfully conduct the program if existing Project instructional materials were judged adequate. Conference room or classroom facilities are necessary, while audio-visual equipment is useful but not required.

The inservice instructor must be knowledgeable about the content of the program and credible as an instructor of practicing school administrators. Knowledge of content can best be acquired by studying the source materials on which the program is based. Credibility can be achieved by the selection of an instructor with professional tenure and a knowledge of the milieu in which the practicing administrator must function. Credibility is also enhanced if the instructor is viewed as a delegate of the administrator's supervisor.

Adherence to the adoption process design is important to the success of the program. A systematic assessment of entry level skills and attitudes is necessary so program components appropriate to the administrators' needs can be offered on a timely basis. A feedback and evaluation system must also be maintained to measure individual participant progress through the adoption process.

Finally, an incentive structure should be developed and maintained by the participating administrator's employing district to support and reward his efforts to improve his professional competence. Participating in the program while administering a school or department requires a high degree of motivation and perseverance on the part of the school administrator. He must be recognized for pursuing this effort and encouraged to try out what he learns by a reward and incentive structure consistent with his personal and professional needs. The administration of the employing district must approve and actively support the instruction and practice of educational management and must promote its adoption by school administrators.

Project Outcomes

At this writing, not all of the data needed to verify the Project's outcomes have been collected and compiled. From the data available at this time, however, it is possible to conclude that the Project has had a positive effect on those administrators who have participated though these positive effects have not resulted in an adoption rate as high as desired. Briefly, some of the outcomes achieved thus far are these:

1. More than half of the district's administrators have voluntarily taken advantage of opportunities offered by the Project to learn about the basic concepts and principles of educational management.
2. Approximately a third of the district's administrators have expressed an interest in the systematic study of educational

management by enrolling in one of the year-long inservice programs offered by the Project.

3. As the result of their participation in the Project, about one third of the participants have developed special project plans for improving some aspect of the educational program or its organization.
4. On the average, those who participate in the Project successfully achieve about 65 percent of the inservice session objectives upon completion of the program. In doing so, these participants acquire basic knowledge of the concepts of educational management, the principles governing educational management and the overall process of information-based decision making.

Part of the Project's final evaluation plan includes the compilation of data about (1) the incidence of behaviors among members of the target group which will help determine what proportion of the group have reached each stage of the adoption process and (2) the degree of knowledge and practical skill acquired by Project participants which will help determine the proportions of participants who possess the competence necessary for independent adoption. The analysis and comparison of these data will yield more reliable information about Project outcomes than is available at the present time.

Additional Information

For additional information concerning any aspect of the Educational Management Project, please contact the Project's director,

Dr. Peter G. Gazzola, P.O. Box 4040, Tucson, Arizona, 85719 (602-791-5181). Examination copies of instructional materials and some Project publications, including evaluation reports, are available upon request.